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newLabour newBritain

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NEO-LABOUR'S 2005 BRIGHTON CONFERENCE A SELL-OUT

Get yer wallets out, the corporate party conference is coming back to town with the usual range of policies, directorships and knighthoods up for grabs to the highest bidder. "20 years ago the Labour conference was packed with social justice campaigners", says Terry, a lifelong party activist, as he contemplates ripping up his membership card. "Now you can't get around without tripping over some suited corporate lackey." Yep, the international law-breaking, war mongering, money-hungry machine that is the Labour Party Plc. is back at to stay in the swankiest hotels in Brighton - whilst the locals have to suffer armed police on every street corner.

Yet again, conference is welcoming with open arms (deals) a range of corrupt and dodgy corporations. This year organisers are even putting on a "Labour Party Corporate Day" in honour of their rich mates (you couldn't make this up!) Tuesday's event is being billed as "a specially designed commercial package for business visitors to Conference". Not only do paying attendees get a reserved seat at Tony's keynote speech and a free lunch to boot, they are also invited to a "series of focused policy seminars with senior Labour figures". If company bosses find this event fully booked, Neo Labour's exhibitors' catalogue proudly offers sponsorship of other conference events such as 'Identity crisis: who do we think we are?' sponsored by Siemens (up for the contracts for I.D. card technology) or how about 'Kyoto: dead or alive? International climate change policy beyond 2012?' sponsored by those eco-minded types at Shell. For the smaller entrepreneur there's always conference maps and staircases to bung a logo on. Even SchNEWS thinks it could afford its logo on a couple of "directional floor tiles"!

Sponsorship's a worthwhile business. Take US arms manufacturer, Raytheon Systems for example. They chucked the Labour party five grand in 1997, sweetening the gift by flying a load of MPs to Paris on a jolly at the same time. A real bargain - despite former Raytheon sales manager, John McDermott, admitting taking £140,000 in bribes two years previously, the company still managed to pick up a Ministry of Offence contract to build a £800m battlefield radar spy-plane system. And don't forget David Sainsbury. Dave donated the Labour party £1 million in 1997, receiving a Lordship in return for his much needed cash injection into a party which had bankrupted itself running its General Election campaign. In 1998, he dug deeper, doubling his donation and, in a completely unrelated

set of events, became the Science Minister in charge of promoting Genetically Modified food on behalf of his various business cronies. Who knows what Enron would have got from the £36,000 they gave the Neo Labour for dinner tickets and conference tables? Given that the company went belly up and drowned in one of the largest financial scandal in history, SchNEWS guesses that we'll never know.

Profits of Doom

If you get bored of wondering around the exhibitors' conference, there are always the corporate sponsored fringe meetings. Why not trundle along to Transport Minister Sephen Ladyman's fireside chat about the success of the government's transport policy? That's being sponsored by the Go-Ahead group. Go-Ahead lost the Thameslink rail franchise due to utterly crap performance; having the lowest customer satisfaction rating of any train operating company - which with our railway system is pretty impressive. Standard Life, meanwhile, is sponsoring a fringe meeting debating whether pensions should be made compulsory. As the one of UK's largest pension providers, Standard Life is just dying to force people to buy its products.

Round the corner, Patricia Hewitt, the Health Secretary, is giving a speech to a meeting debating 'public service delivery'. They'll be no doctor or nurse joining her on the platform though; instead she'll be cosying up to one of the partners from accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a company at the forefront of the business of advising people how to avoid paying the kinds of taxes which are needed to run the a health service. Much of this corporate success has been thanks the Neo Labour peer, Lord Michael Levy. He is reported to have raised £12 million for the party's 'high value fund' before the 1997 election, quickly becoming known as 'Mr Cashpoint'. Although a multi-millionaire, he only paid £5,000 in tax in 1998-9 and less than £10,000 in 1997-8 as he said he wasn't working.

Of the 97 official high-value donors in 1998-9 more than 30 have received some kind of Government job. And, the revolving door works both ways: in order to maintain

Cost of policing this year:

- * **Neo Labour Conference** in Brighton £3,692 million. Paid for by central government (ie taxpayer)
- * **DSEI Arms Fair** £4 million (paid for by central government)
- * **Raft Race Fundraiser** organised by the RNLI £4,000 (see briefs back page)

"The first stage of Fascism should more properly be called Corporatism, because it is the merger of State and corporate power."
- Benito Mussolini

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being in a Barbershop Quartet!
Police arrested four people at last week's **DSEI Arms Fair** protest who performed an anti-war song in the style of a Barbershop Quartet with hands covered in blood. They were originally arrested them under an obscure 1824 'enclosure' law, then for burglary. After a few hours in the cell they were let go with a fixed penalty notice of £80 for causing "harassment alarm or distress". Not a good result for public harmony.

influence at the heart of government, the corporations are buying up the party's special advisers. Tim Allan, a former Downing Street adviser, went on to become the Director of Corporate Communications for Rupert Murdoch's BSKyB. Blair's former 'Gatekeeper' private secretary, Anji Hunter, also left Tony's side to take over as Director of Communications at BP on a salary of £200,000.

If all the corporate activity wears you out, don't think that Bono's going to save you. He's in town and headlining on Wednesday to tell conference-goers how to solve world poverty. In case you miss the speech, SchNEWS can reveal that lapdog Bono will likely be recommending business as usual. Two years ago in a similar discussion on poverty Bono must have missed the fact that one quarter of US children grow up in poverty, when he said he'd moved on from U2's anti-American lyrics, adding, "now, America looks smart and dare I say it, sexy again." Give him a biscuit!

When, back in 1998, Peter Mandelson told reporters that "the Labour party is intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich", he was clearly talking in particular about elite members of Neo Labour and its corporate cronies, because Labour MPs were dashing around Brighton last week in a desperate attempt to find themselves somewhere to stay. They come way down on the pecking list for hotels, with the party elite and the exhibitors booking some 18 months ahead. That's priorities for you! No wonder exhibitors recently praised the party for running the 'friendliest' political conference in Europe! The party is now so far from its roots as a political party of the working classes as to be unrecognisable and corporate interests have effectively privatised the political process. Fight back. Don't give money to strange men in suits - visit the SchNEWS website and chuck us a tenner instead!

* For more on Neo Labour's corporate links www.red-star-research.org.uk

Hippies and anarchists – never get anything organised do they? Or if they do, it never lasts because they lack bureaucratic fibre don't they? Well in 1972, a bunch of layabouts broke into a disused Ministry of Defence facility in Copenhagen, Denmark, and declared an autonomous living space, which they named Christiania. 'Losers' from all parts of Denmark joined in, building houses, planting gardens, sharing skills and providing services until a thriving Freetown was established, with hundreds of residents. 33 years later and they are still there.

The town's guiding principle is that everything is allowed until it bothers somebody else. The only rules are a ban on hard drugs, violence, weapons and the selling or renting of buildings or living space. All decisions are made collectively in a "common meeting" open to all residents, which are held whenever needed. There is no governing council or other administrative body, and decisions are made by consensus rather than majority vote.

Annoyingly for the Danish authorities this concept seemed to work too damn well (you can just imagine the politicians saying to each other, "Don't worry, they'll be at each others' throats within a year..."). The town however, hadn't read the script and went from strength to strength, growing to over a thousand residents and becoming a centre for art, music and sustainable living. They developed and maintained an entire infrastructure for the town with electricity (experimenting with solar and

renewables long before it was mainstream), water supplies, garbage collection and recycling. In time they had a soccer team, a nursery and children's playgrounds, a weekly newspaper, a radio station, communal shops and factories (specialising in sustainable, eco-friendly innovations of course), a restaurant and several cafes and night clubs. Tourists and locals started wanting to see what all the fuss was about, and eventually Christiania became the third most popular attraction in Denmark with 750,000 visitors a year! After 25 years of trying unsuccessfully to dismantle the community, from political and legal pressure to police raids on the site, the government finally had to give up in 1994 and they agreed to tolerate the town and "legalise" it as a "social experiment"...

DANISH BACON

Until recently that is. In the summer of 2004 a new law (Law 205) was passed, a 3-phase bill effectively designed to finally destroy Christiania for good. By forcing all Danes to register with the state and essentially then privatising the land beneath their feet, on Jan 1st 2006 the residents' will have to pay the government-set market price for their land or face removal. Building and planning regulations will begin to be enforced, with any buildings not meeting 'normal' (i.e. marketable) standards will be torn down. Despite a march of 10,000 protestors against the law in Oct 2004, plans are still in place and the opening skirmishes

of the battle for Christiania and self-management have already begun. On Sept 7th, around 200 riot police stormed in and quickly sealed off 'Fredens Eng' (The Meadow of Peace), part of the site where people live in trailers. In one of the biggest mass arrests in Denmark ever, the police nicked over 100 people, forcibly removing people and caravans alike. There are various reports of injured people, with some charged for not following police orders and others relating to violence against the police. The town is now bracing itself for increased attacks like this one as New Year approaches. Well we can't allow people to govern themselves can we?

The town's own site is www.christiania.org

Footage of raids and other links at www.indymedia.org

* A global day of action happened last week in support of a "community of neutrality" in Columbia. In 1997, the Community of San José de Apartadó declared themselves a "Peace Community", hoping to create a space free from fighters from any group involved in the country's endless conflict to entering their land. The community believe that one group attracts the other, so want now to do with any of 'em.

The actions were to commemorate the killing of 8 residents (3 of them kids) by the Army last February. They also coincided with an international Gathering in San Jose, Columbia. More at www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk

SchNEWS in brief

Demonstration against **Compulsory Treatment Orders** - enforced medication on mentally ill people - next Monday (26th) 12.30pm outside the Brighton Centre, organised by **Mad Pride** and **No Force**. 07963 949575 ** **'Section 60' Benefit Gig & Party** for the Saorsa social centre and people facing court after the G8. Two live music stages, two sound systems, films, food, bar, kids space and chill out zone. Music will be a wide range of Indy, punk, reggae, metal, house and Celtic rock. Friday (30th) at the Warehouse, 20 Dora Street, Dalmarnock, Glasgow. www.g42collective.net ** Talk with an **Israeli anarchist from a refusenik group** in Israel, about the Palestine Wall and the Gaza pullout, at The Red Rose, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London, 8pm, Thurs 29th ** **Bubbling up Down Under - Workers' struggles in Australia**. Members of Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group will be speaking at the Autonomy Club, Freedom Bookshop next Thursday (29th) Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7.30pm info@afed.org.uk ** If you're in the Bath area and fancy some radical literature check out the **'From Ashes Rise'** stall at Green Park Station most Saturdays 07814 677458 ashetrise@yahoo.co.uk ** **Support the sacked Gate Gourmet workers** - join the pickets between the Cargo terminal and Terminal 4 (7am to 7pm) www.sackedbygategourmet.org.uk ** Monday (26th) is the start of the trial of the **George Fox 6** - six Lancaster University students who were charged with aggravated trespass who were trespassing on their own university's property (!) when handing out leaflets against a privatisation conference. Demonstration at Lancaster Magistrates Court, Thurnham St, Lancaster from 8.45am. www.free-webspace.biz/GeorgeFox ** **Who Pays The Bill?** New rules from the Association Of Police Officers force all private events - community, sports, charities and festivals - to pay the bill for policing. Events such as the Mumbles Raft Race Fundraiser in aid of lifeboats - which has gone on incident free for 21 years but had to pay £4000 from the £15000 raised for unneeded cops to be there. Football clubs will be hit with a 43% rise in police costs. On the other hand the **DSEi Arms Fair** is exempt - because it was held indoors, and the protests were *outside*.

Crap Racism of the Week

For spending too long on the bog!

On the anniversary of 9-11 two Muslim men were forced off a plane by fellow passengers. The flight due to leave from Cyprus was cancelled after some passengers became worried that one of the men had spent a long time on the toilet. They were removed from the plane and questioned by police who concluded there was no problem with the men who had been on a pilgrimage to see a Muslim spiritual figure in northern Cyprus. The flight took off the next day without the two men, who had to fly with a different airline.

VERTI-GO

Last week two peace campaigners Kate Holcombe and Ludd McCloud spent three days up a 1500 foot communication mast inside a secret military base at Padworth Common, Berkshire. With enough food and water for a week, they secured a platform up the mast, unfurled banners 'Nukes Out' and 'US Bases Out Of UK', and 'hung out' at Padworth which is the distribution hub for fuel to UK's nuclear weapons factory at Aldermaston, and US bases in Britain.

But when the MOD built a fence around the occupied mast and guarded it with bods from private security firm Corporate Guarding, the two protesters decided to show how crap the security was, and escaped during the early hours of Monday - which included breaking out of the base itself. For more see: www.tridentploughshares.org * Demonstration this Sunday (25th) at **USAF Lakenheath** to demand the withdrawal of the 110 nuclear bombs deployed at this base. 12pm main gate on the A1065 3 miles sth of Brandon. 01508 550446 dwhiggin@dhiggin.fsnet.co.uk

Positive SchNEWS

When a Muslim woman became the target of a hate-mail campaign by Flemish fascists for wearing a headscarf to work, no-one saw how it would backfire.

Her co-workers began to all wear scarves themselves, and the factory's owner has been on international media channels denouncing the cowardly Nazis. She even got a visit from the Belgian King! The incident has proved embarrassing for the country's strong right-wing anti-immigrant party, who had previously supported such intolerant views.

...and finally...

Before the DSEi Arms Fair in London, ten thousand copies of a free paper, the East London Adversaries, was delivered to about 90% of homes in the Canning Town area. It was similar in appearance to the East London Advertiser and is the latest in a long list of spoof papers that have been produced. The editor of the Advertiser claims that Anarchists 'passed off' the Advertiser, clearly he is pissed off that his 'reputation' has been tarnished. But his reputation may be pretty low because as one papergirl who delivered the spoof Adversaries commented: "...several times I had to assure people that it wasn't the Advertiser before they would take a paper from me"

Editor Malcolm Starbrook says that his paper is apolitical and said "We always report on the event, but we never take a view." Presumably the international arms trade is not good for advertising! Of the spoof, Starbrook moaned "It's all spun against the organisers of the event, but we have never tried to side with the protesters." Clearly the Advertiser is more used to parroting the police line about violent baby-eating anarchists: "I am angered that an organisation sets itself up to replicate a reputable newspaper and uses the respect we have to gain support for what is a call for protests and, even worse, the possibility of violence." - unlike the business of selling cluster bombs, pistols and helicopter gunships, of course.

Starbrook also claimed that: "If we could stop them we would, but the whole thing about anarchy is that you can't find those in charge." Clearly he hadn't looked that closely or he would have seen the words "Published by Hamsters" and their contact details. A spokesperson for the Hamsters said, "Nobody from the Advertiser has tried to contact us via either email or phone so Starbrook would appear to be making malicious claims in order to discredit our publication... The East End Advertiser is welcome to take legal action if he rates his chances, although no other political spoof that I am aware of has lost such a case. In the meantime, perhaps Hamsters will seek legal advice as to the possibility of issuing a writ for libel against us." To read East London Adversaries see: www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2005/09/323198.html

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... watch out for goose-steppers down on the seafont this week. Honest!

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